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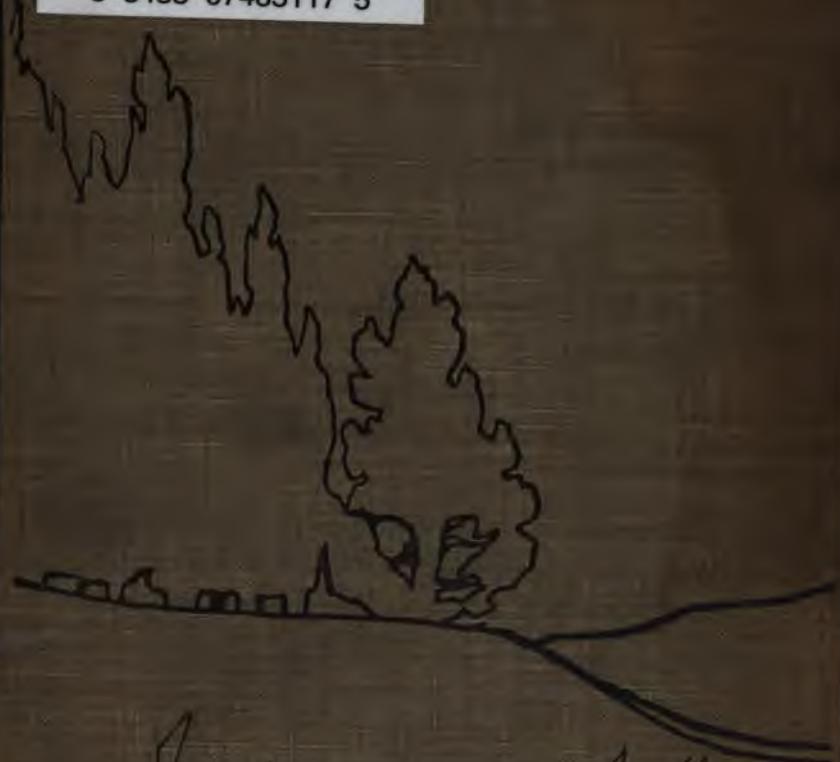
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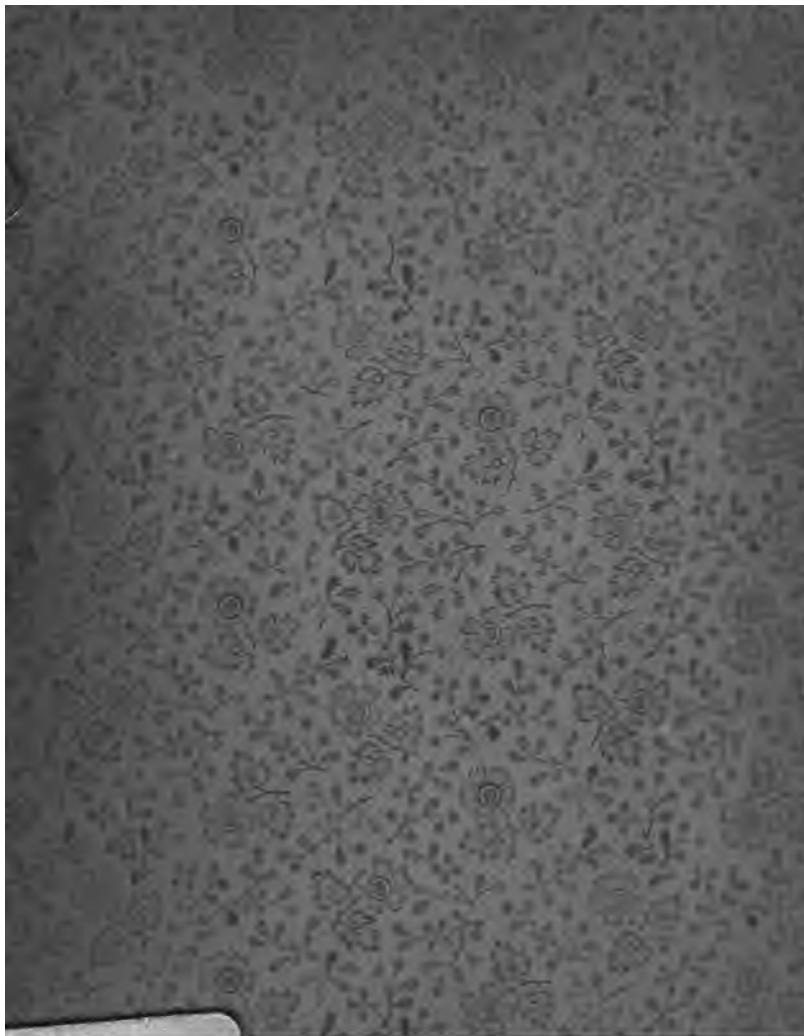
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In the Narrow Path

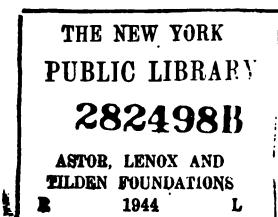
PAUL HARBOE

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J. HEIDINGSFELD, PUBLISHER,
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

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PAUL HARBOE

To the Memory of My Father

43 X 564

Keeṇ to the heart of pain
A sordid chill
Creepeth, O sombre Daṇe !
Bitter and shrill
Through the dull fog and rain
Of an undawned season,
Smiteth a cry

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Taming the Bear.

KRAG had tried harder than ever that day to win.

There had been the usual, almost daily wrangle. He had done his best, but was outclassed. So in the end his wife leaned back on the couch dramatically and sighed. Her wild gesticulation, the fierce foot-stamping on the carpetless floor, the mixed noises; in short, all that miscellaneous tumult had wearied her. Victory was no longer glorious; it was of too common occurrence; it was growing monotonous.

And Krag—Krag took his hat and went out. He felt like an unwelcome guest in his own house.

* * * * *

They had been married seven years. They

had no children. It was best so, her mother had said. Oh, her mother was a sage. Nothing was beyond her, everything was easy, so very easy! When she relinquished her daughter—the only child—she knew that he drank; she knew that he was a bear, and like a bear, should be tamed and trained. But she had handled men—her late husband, for instance. He was a bear too; not a big, strong and rough bear like Krag, for he had been a small, slim person of no physical power, and gentle as a lamb. Nevertheless, from her viewpoint he was a bear, being of the masculine gender.

Then, on his wedding day, the experiment with Krag was begun. He was tamed and trained by his mother-in-law, who found this a fascinating pastime, a kind of sport difficult to leave. Her daughter for a time was a spectator only. But the play wearied her, it dragged like some of the novels, she thought.



There was no movement, no spirit in it. So, at length she took hold of the reins; her mother, of course, still held the whip. But two drivers to a single steed are worse than none.

Krag had cared something for his wife the spectator. He had believed when he married her that she loved him. He respected and listened to the counsel of his mother-in-law. She was always so polite—a queer thing in elderly women. And there was reason in her advices, He saw that it was wrong in him to drink. But if he stopped altogether he would lose many friends; and he was not yet quite ready for a new world. He liked his home immensely at first; it was cosy, cheerful, elegant. His mother-in-law had put it together. Krag regarded his home as a magnificent present, paid for by himself, while purchased by a more competent person.

But Krag could not give up the glass. While

his home fairly sang with its beauty, the song did not seem to come from the heart; it was imitation, machine-made. In the grog-shops near his great ship-building works, where dirt-spotted, ragged men drank and laughed—men who were under his charge—he liked to go and sit among them. Krag did not go there so much to drink, as to hear their stories. He knew their language—the crude, unpolished way of saying things, and he thoroughly understood them. All had something to tell. Krag marveled at this; he had nothing he thought—nothing worth a story.

Of course he could have told them about his great success in life; how he had climbed the ladder slowly, with sure treading until now—But that would be self-praise, a thing Krag despised. Also, he questioned his own happiness. Perhaps these hoary men, who came too often to the grog-shops and stayed too long, perhaps they were happier than he was. Per-

haps even they could have been rich had they so desired. He did not know; he had never asked them and they had never told him. Some of the men who seldom came to the grog-shops spoke tenderly of their wives, and of their children with enthusiasm. Krag listened to them with eagerness; it was all so fresh and strange. He had never felt a desire to speak of his wife to anyone. But the children—

He had observed the children too, these small, careless and grotesque figures that rolled in the gutters in summer half naked; and in winter, painstakingly huddled up in bundles of cloth—ran to school mornings, and at noon carried dinner-baskets to their parents. It was a long, long time since Krag had carried a dinner-basket.

And he had been a child too! This consideration gave him comfort now; it was delicious and nourishing. But to-day he was a man; they called him great, they praised him im-

mensely—other men. They talked so much about him and his attainments, but never about his wife, never about his home.

But why should they? After all, it was nothing to them. But they talked so much about their wives, their homes and their children; just that had brought him so often among them; nay, more than this, it had made him one of their own. He was, in truth, but a child in the group of children; he was only the leader in the play. And the playground was his great ship-building works on the shore.

This his mother-in-law knew. This was the evil for which there must be a remedy. Krag was uncouth, barked—and he drank. If he would give up the glass and cut off his familiarity with the men! How could he find happiness in the dirty grog-shops and none in his elegant home? It was ingratitude. It must be ingratitude!

They had played for him and sung, hours

and hours evenings ; but Krag did not understand the music. To him it was cold and foreign, and although he took a certain pride in his wife's accomplishments, a narrow, altogether selfish pride, he would have preferred other listeners to the music than himself.

The trivial misunderstandings, the little difficulties and the restrained quarrels, all expanded, took root and tore themselves away. After a while the common wrangle came into use at Krag's home .

And Krag—Krag would take his hat and go out, feeling like an unwelcome guest in his own house.

It was his birthday ; he was forty years old. He had just suggested to his wife that it might be a good plan to invite a number of his friends to spend this evening at his home. His wife, half laughing, responded that she and her mother had already arranged the details of the reception. Krag wanted to know who had

been invited. Well, a number of her mother's friends and a few of Krag's, a rich lumber dealer, a railroad president, and a certain wealthy manufacturer.

But was not Karts invited; and Gransen, and—? Of course no. No! No! Who was Gransen? Who was Karts? She did not know; she did not wish to learn. A tired smile of faint scorn overspread her countenance. He said something in a low tone of voice, a few words uttered hopelessly in suppressed bitterness. She did not hear, she was thinking of her overwhelming superiority, of her polished wit, and above all of herself. She remained standing, not listening, nor even expecting any word from him. They were far apart, and she was toying with a tiny fan from the Orient.

"You may entertain *your* friends," he burst out with tentative emphasis. "I have another engagement for this evening."

She gave him one look and sank down upon the divan. "I am pleased," she said wearily. "You will never be a social success."

He started to go, but stopped short to gaze with a kind of admiration around the room, at the rich lace, the priceless vases, the paintings, and at last at his wife. It was all much like an attempt at a quick comparison of things. She had been watching him not without interest, and as he moved toward her she smiled encouragingly.

"I have a favor to ask," he began, with solemnness. "Oh, it is only this," he hastened to add, seeing her impatience. "It's my birthday, Helena!"

She got up and held out her hand. "And you want me to congratulate you?"

"No, Helena, I want nothing. But will you have the kindness to tell your guests when they come? Tell them, if you please, that it is my birthday!" He spoke low and distinctly.

though his voice seemed like the near echo of another, as if in his breast a stronger tongue was speaking. Unmistakeable sorrow was there, sorrow that did not, could not make itself outwardly evident ; but you could detect it in the very breathing of this strong man, of heavy limbs, and great muscles.

She had paled a little and drew back, from the fear of him, as he thought. At this he wondered ; had he really frightened her ; and if so, then in what ? But she had not answered him. No matter, he reflected, he would go. As he turned, she spoke slowly and with kindness, and as if he had just put the question.

“Yes, I will tell them, if you will not stay.”

“I prefer to go,” he said shortly. He left her then, without another word.

A moment later, the guests began to arrive, the rich lumber dealer, the railroad president, and the wealthy manufacturer ; and the friends of her mother. Krag on his way could see the

carriages roll by; their occupants were going to his home—on his birthday.

Here in the melancholy gloom of the narrow, crooked street the real sadness of the affair came full upon him. Walking there alone in the rainy night, without a destination or aim, at every step drawing farther and farther away from his home and those who should love him, or at least should respect him—this reflection was painful.

He glanced about him now and then, half timidly and with apprehension. It was comical after all, he came to think, that he a man of so much means should feel, or be led to feel, like a penniless vagrant.

“My birthday,” he said aloud, “and they are drinking a toast to me at my home. They are making merry at the expense of the absent host.” He turned the whole thing around in his mind, till the brighter side of it came on

top. No, he would not go to the grog-shop; he must find Gransen.

Gransen was at home, and a curly-haired girl was sleeping on his knee. That is why Gransen did not rise to open the door. Krag, pleasantly surprised at the spectacle, smiled, but made no sound. After a while Gransen carried the child into an adjacent chamber, and returned with:

"I could not come to-night; she is not well."

"Your daughter?" said Krag.

"No, but she is more than a daughter to me!"

Krag wondered.

"You see," the other began—"But you'll not be interested in the story."

Krag showed that he was already interested.

"Well, you see,—Oh, the story is but a paragraph. I knew her parents; her father drank too much. His name was Hansen, Jens Hansen, and he was killed in the works last year.

Do you remember the accident? I believe it was suicide, for they could not get on together; there was no love at home. So I took the child."

"Why, I thought she was your own."

Gransen had gone into the bed-room, and when he came back, he whispered softly to Krag:

"If we could all be like that little child!"

Krag fixed his eyes on the floor; he was putting his strength to a test. At last it came out, brokenly, with tremendous effort:

"Gransen, she's yours I know, but may I not see her just once more?"

The big men moved stealthily over the floor, Krag first and carrying the low-burning light. At the side of the cot Krag, giving the lamp to Gransen, bent over and kissed the warm, white forehead of the sleeping child. To his bewilderment, she opened very slowly, almost painfully, her large brown eyes and looked in full

security into his. Then her lips slid apart, and she uttered wearily, yet with joy:

“Father!” and in the next instant she was sleeping as peacefully as before.

* * * * *

“Gransen,” said Krag half an hour later, during which space of time no sound of voice had passed between them, “how glorious it must be to be called father!”

Then as he pulled on his coat to go: “I thank God for that birthday present.”

Two Bachelors.

 O Unmarried American Ladies:—I am, ladies, a dear friend of a certain gentleman, a bachelor of course like myself, and who is, as all real bachelors should be, a bashful and very timid man; meek as the lamb, willing as your pet dog and happy as the canary. Yet entre nous, ladies, he might be happier. Celibacy is not all sunshine and man does yearn finally for those comforts and joys to which marriage, successful marriage that is, should conduce. I will be frank; my friend wants a wife. A dear, sweet, little wife she must be—but we will come to that later. This open letter, then, is a proposal. It is a devious course to pursue, but you will forgive me. Remember I too am a bachelor, over

modest and shy; and my pen is mightier than my tongue.

I shall now, as I have promised, delineate the general character of my friend, showing you, unbiased, his faults and virtues. And I vow not to obscure the first nor exaggerate the last. It is my heartiest wish to see my friend happily married; and for that reason I write this unselfishly in his behalf—perhaps in yours. Not for the world would I have you make a fatal misstep; it is a long way to fall. The responsibility rests alone on my shoulders.

Well, my friend has not yet reached forty. He is of my age, thirty-nine last Christmas. I think his being born on that holiday is something in his favor. Just think of a double celebration on Christmas day! Ah, how we two have lived and laughed on Christmas—yes, and other days.

He has dark eyes, very dark; they sit far back and are bright and health evincing; his

hair, a shade lighter, curls prettily. He parts it in the middle. A great fellow for neatness, my friend. I particularly like him for that. He is tall and rather broad across the shoulders. You would never suspect him for thirty-nine. To me, who have known him all my life, he seems—I promised you the truth—twenty-six; no more, upon my honor. He is exacting, fastidious even, but not with primness. A delightful dancer, an entertaining companion, distinctly not a club-man. He likes his glass, I must own; but I have never seen him under its baneful influence. I said he danced delightfully. He did, in truth, up at college, when he was too young for bachelordom. I dare not say how he would carry himself at a crowded hop now, but I have a vague presentiment that he would make a fine mess of it all.

And an entertaining companion? You will find him so when you know him. Ah! the pleasure, ladies, of being alone with one who

understands you, even silence itself can be heard then. We two have sat together in my little country cottage, through the long summer evenings night after night. It was like being with myself only. And now, I feel with disturbing regret that this life with him must cease. He will have another—a closer, dearer friend to entertain, delight and love. And what will become of me? I must be face to face with a new life alone; while he will have in place of me, one who— But I grow disconsolate, almost; I meant to be unselfish and sacrificing like poor Dobbins in *Vanity Fair*. I realize now what a stupendous undertaking I have begun.

He is not a club-man; there was a time, before we knew each other so closely, that he was. But that is, let me see, ten or twelve years ago. I was then a club-man, too. But the club, ladies, is not a home. When a man has reached, let's say thirty, he would have a

home, if he has ever loved or been loved. My friend has never known affection, but now, as I have said, he wants a wife to love. Thus, then, you may believe, he will have done with me. The old gives way to the new. I step back; another walks forward.

Yet I wonder, it is my place to wonder, if he will be all changed afterward. Can woman, I ask myself, can woman, however noble, virtuous, work miracles? Can he forget me altogether, do you think; shall I have died for him at the birth of Her? This speculation, to confess, dashes freezing water over my heated head. Being hers, he cannot be mine; and to relinquish him would mean—I know not what. But it must transpire. We have consulted together, my friend and I, for months, aye it is years now, agreeing always on that. We do agree when we are alone. But now, as I am speaking to others, being for the time without his hearing, my much suppressed wretched-

ness becomes, I fear, strikingly apparent and palpable almost ; I differ with him on such occasions as this, I the skeptic, he the man of faith.

But there is, I acknowledge, a brighter side. (I am coming to the end of my proposal.) Since he is unhappy in his present condition, how can I be glad ? When he sobs, can I sing, and when he mourns should I rejoice ? Life has linked us inseparably together. Whoever he marries becomes my wife, for I am my friend ; and my friend is—myself.

The Old Peasant of Ollerup.

HE lived in his own straw-thatched house, half brick and half timber, which stood by itself at the foot of the long hill, some little distance west of Ollerup.

No one ever came to see him ; and he himself seldom ventured out beyond his gate. There was a dainty, fresh-looking garden within the fence, a narrow path of gravel dividing it ; the house lying perhaps a hundred feet back. Most of his time, I was informed, was spent in keeping this garden absolutely weedless and otherwise perfect.

Everybody in Ollerup knew his life-story like a well-learned lesson. Already I had heard it many times, in just as many different phases ; one would tell it with a certain pathos,

another lightly, while a third would treat it as an anecdote, humorous and merely to be laughed at or even ridiculed.

"He is a simpleton," they said to me. "He could have married as fine a girl as was ever seen in Ollerup. He thought he was too poor. Bah, the fool! He was not at all poor, and she had several hundred kroners saved up, and land of her own besides. He would not listen to reason. He was afraid of debt—the simpleton, aye, the gawk!"

One Sunday morning, I had been a week at Ollerup, I strolled down the Landevej in the direction of his home. As I drew near I could see him watering his plants and bending over now and then to crush a lump of hard earth or to pull up a stray, unwelcome weed. To me he paid no notice till he heard the sharp click of the gate as it closed. Then he stopped his work suddenly, turned and faced me with a surprised, half-startled gaze.

"Oh," he cried in a moment, smiling sadly, "I took you for the clog-maker. I owe him for my last pair. I meant to have paid him yesterday," he went on convincingly, "but it was—it was Katherina's birthday and—" He stopped short at this, as if there was nothing more to say; as if he expected me to understand. He had, in the moment of silence, turned from me and now stood looking at the sun.

"Katherina was your old friend?"

He faced me quickly and with eagerness.
"Has she told you? Do you know her?"

"They told me in the village," I replied quietly.

"Tell me," he cried almost with fierceness, "did they blame me? Did they say it was my fault?"

"Katherina loved you?"

"Katherina loved me," he repeated, his voice falling to a low, musical whisper. "Come into

my house and you shall hear the story from me."

We followed the gravel path around the house and entered a bare, but very clean-kept kitchen. Indeed it might have been a woman's hand that had done the work. There was a table before the window, and one stool, an old-fashioned stove, polished to a glitter; a white-painted closet, of which the door stood open, showing its shiny dishes and plates—nothing more.

"I was born in this house," he began when he had fetched me a chair from the parlor. "My father died while I was in my cradle. My mother, poor, dear woman, guarded me only too well. As I grew up I wanted to be a watch-maker, for I loved this painstaking work. But she would not have me associate among apprentices, fearing lest their company should spoil my good character. Nor would she let me go to school with other boys. Our

pastor gave me lessons in religion. I had no friends—no friends except Katherina. She intended me to be a child for all time—her child only.”

He paused.

“You call Katherina a friend, but did you not love her?”

“Love her!” he retorted sternly. “How could I think of love! I had my mother then. A mother who would not suffer me to leave her elbow. I was kept to my home, away from all—away from Katherina.”

He stopped again, as if the whole story had been told. We sat in silence for a little while. At length he leaned forward, so far that his hand could have touched my face. “And then she died, my mother, in her seventieth year. Oh, the despair, the absolute grief and agony! No man can ever know it. I stood there at her bier, the helpless child she had made me. What knew I of the great world? These

rooms and the garden were my world. I could not eat, I could not sleep, and my senses seemed paralyzed. A neighbor came to ask me when I would bury her—the minister came too. I answered them that I did not know. I did not think that she should be buried. ‘She is not in the way,’ I told them. But then—then Katherina came.”

This time the silence was long, but not oppressive. Indeed it seemed quite natural that he should hesitate at this point.

“My mother was buried. She lies under the tall oaks on the little hill.” He pressed his finger against the window-pane to indicate her grave. I could barely see it from my place.

We heard quick steps on the path, and then, a moment later, a sharp, loud knock.

“The clog-maker, and I owe him for my last pair,” cried the old peasant, leaping from his chair. “Oh, I am so sorry I did not pay

him yesterday," he went on nervously, in great excitement. I opened to find his butcher there. The old peasant had hurried into his parlor for money.

When he returned, he recounted a number of silver coins, and laid them carefully, one upon the other, on the table. "My circumstances are somewhat better than they used to be. But," he added gravely, "one must be parsimonious, lest one should fall into debt." The very thought of this made him shudder. "I must not forget the clog-maker when he comes; I am always afraid of my memory. It is very poor."

"So you did not love Katherina," I urged, trying to get the truth out of the man.

His childish, kind face lighted up the instant, and his tender, blue eyes looked as though they saw, straight before them, some happy scene taken out of the dead past.

"Ah, yes," he said slowly and with clear-

ness. "I loved her—when my mother was gone. We were to have been married. I had found, in spite of my restless conscience, that it would be best. And Katherina appointed a day. She was in Svendborg then." He was speaking hurriedly, as if he believed I already knew the rest. "With expectancy and joy, mingled with despair and grief I looked forward to that day. I counted my means and considered my prospects. No, I could not, I wrote Katherina. She was willing to postpone our wedding day. She was willing—the good girl.

"Finally, after much fresh deliberation, I wrote her to come. I was at last ready. Oh, I loved her. I could not live away from her. And yet—

"On Thursday, when my heart was heaviest, I wrote in my utter despair, a very long letter. I told her that I could not marry now, that they might have to bury me an imposter. I

could not drag her into my miserable life. And yet in the postscript I asked her to come." His breathing now was heavy and irregular. "She wrote, 'If you dare not, I dare not.' That was all.

"Sunday morning I awoke early and hurried into my new black suit, which I had placed the night before carefully on a chair near my bed. I stood some time before the mirror admiring myself. Ha-ha! I would not wear the suit to the church. I would carry it upon my arm—ha-ha—upon my arm.

"I made no breakfast—Katherina would prepare an excellent dinner. I started out at the commencement of the chimes. People with flattened noses at the window-panes, stared at me. It was raining lightly. I hurried onward—onward—with my black suit—but Katherina was not at the church. Then I remembered her note: 'If you dare not, I dare not,' and retraced my steps."

"Have you ever seen Katherina since that time?"

At the sound of my voice he started queerly. "Seen her?" he spoke slowly, in a whisper. "Yes, yes, I have, I have." He fell forward across the table, exhausted. There he lay for some time, perfectly still. At last, when he raised himself and turned his eyes to mine, they were dry.

"I am very tired," he said in a childish voice. "I am going in for a short rest. Will you wait here and pay the clog-maker for me?"

I tarried for a few minutes, then stole softly out of the room. On the Landevej I spied an old woman, very neatly dressed, coming slowly down the hill. She was carrying a big basket. To my "Good morning" she smiled, and quickened her pace a little.

At the gate she stopped, as if to view the garden. I knew her then and went up the hill. But the steepness and length of it were both diminished, I thought.

The Suicide of Black Wolf.

CFAMILIAR insignia of the tobacco store—the wooden Indian—is dying.

Very naturally, say the specialists, and the venerable warrior listens to the fatal news even with cheerfulness. For years and years he has stood guard of its entrance with threatening tomahawk and shaded eyes. Gaunt and mighty, an image, not an effigy, my friends. An image of life, lacking only breath to speak audibly! He has called you many times in advertising his master's business, but often you have not heard him. Have you never observed his half-beseeching, anxious, almost fearful glance, when you would stroll by him, a fresh-bought perfecto between your teeth and five others in your case? He knows they are there, you see!

Well, soon he will call you no more, and then perhaps you will miss him. After all, he has lasted a long time, has outlived in prominence, one might say, his original, the live Red Man. But now Black Wolf shall speak for himself.

Scene: Ik Smith's "Cigar and Tobacco Store," Main street, Port Valley. A small crowd has gathered to see the dilapidated, shrunken figure of Black Wolf which is to be removed. There is a slight lull in the proceedings. The Indian, throwing back his shoulders and brandishing his tomahawk, beckons for silence, and begins:—

"GENTLEMEN:—Just a few words in parting. I have long prepared myself for this hour, but it has come abruptly, without pre-warning. Yet, let that be. I am not sorry to go, gentlemen. My work, onerous, irksome, monotonous, has always been a thankless job. For fifty years, or is it more, I have stood here

on my shaky pedestal, exposed to storms and rains, frosts and snows. For Ik Smith wasn't the man to throw an oil coat over my uncovered shoulders, or once to shove my figure under his awning. (Thank you, sir; I will smoke; a good cigar is always innoxious. And will you kindly strike a match?) I am retiring and will have no successor. And why are you about to send me off? Am I such an ungainly, cumbrous body as to mar the decent appearance of this place? Have I lost my vogue? Do people shun me? I am certainly no longer a novelty, yet over there in your park you have a statue of Rob. White, your Revolutionary hero. Do you think of tearing that down? You laugh and jeer—it is your unrestricted privilege. So I must be your clown, your jester, I who would claim respect and friendship from you.

"When I came here first, all new and fresh,
what glorious welcome you gave me then! 'A

silent, but none the less conspicuous guest, has arrived in our city for permanent residence,' said the *Budget*.

"Ah! you young miscreants can't remember that, nor can you, Ik Smith. Were your good father here, he would tell you. 'Tis half a century since, gentlemen, half a century. Look now at me!—the veteran, aged, decrepit, useless, am I not? Laugh again, yet I tell you I am in a serious mood. (Will you, sir, kindly strike another match? I have thoughtlessly neglected my cigar.)

"I mark your apparent anxiety to continue your work, and I shall not delay you much longer with my tiresome and devious speechifying. Here comes a youth with his camera. That is right, young man, take a last snap-shot of old Black Wolf. I am posing. I will never see the likeness, but am glad nevertheless in contemplation of your interest in me. When you are old you might show it to your children.

Such men like us will be quaint curiosities then. And I beg of you, give Mr. Smith, my dear friend, a photo. He will probably place it in his shop window, and thus I will not have died altogether.

"I am ready, gentlemen. Do not procrastinate. As Caesar has said, 'the suddenest death is the best.' What, do you fear my harmless tomahawk? Hold, there, young toper! I protest. Must I be lassoed like the wild broncho of the prairies? It is unfair, cowardly! What will you do? Do not tug so hard at the rope, dear friends, you are strangling me. Ah, here is the box-cart—my hearse, in truth. Pray, let me go in peace. Why all this unnecessary force? You are inhuman, brutish! I am powerless, utterly, can you not see for yourselves?"

"Wait, wait, give me a final word, I——"

There was a heavy tug at the rope, and this time Black Wolf was nearly displaced from

his stand. Now goaded into wild fury at this barbarous treatment, the Indian started to swing his tomahawk in reckless fashion and succeeded finally in cutting the taut line which was fast tightening its grip about his neck. Uttering a frenzied whoop, he brought down the blunt end of the weapon, fiercely striking himself squarely in the temple. He reeled, and then fell hard to the earth.

They picked him up, these heartless men, and carelessly threw his big form into the waiting wagon. The crowd scattered in jolly humor.

"Is Ik going to get a new one?" some one asked.

"Nope," said the youth with the camera. "Ik says there out o' date. Ik wants to be up with the times. I'm glad I got his picture."

Meanwhile the cart bearing the body of the last Red Man had gone.

The Other Woman.



O the soulful music of the great organ they went arm in arm out of the church and entered a waiting carriage, which at his order immediately drove off, and swinging around the corner at brisk speed, rolled on toward their new home. The congregation tarried for a moment on the street, then scattered slowly. The minister removed his cossack in the anteroom, and the music having ceased he started slowly down the aisle.

Suddenly a childish sob startled him; for the church appeared to be empty, but in the last pew, in a crouching position, he found a young girl weeping. The minister laid his hand gently on her thick brown hair. She raised her head and her look was the look of the child to a parent.

"You must not stay here," he said kindly, helping her up. "The others have all gone."

Without a word she put on her hat and started for the door, but he called her back.

"Wait, my child," he said. "Was it," he pointed to the altar, "was it anything to you?"

She turned her eyes in the direction which the carriage, a few minutes ago, had taken.

"It was everything," she cried brokenly, and hurried down the steps.

The minister stood and watched her till she disappeared.

"Her heart broken," he said softly, "and their hopes fulfilled at my hand, God help me!"

* * * * *

Knud Bertelsen had loved both of them. But the woman he married made more of him. She could wheedle and flatter, which the other woman could not, and Knud, vain like most men of unsettled minds and flexible tempera-

ments, had led her to the altar, believing in his heart that her love was deeper and hence was a better love than that of the girl who wept in the church when it was all over. Of course he found out the truth after a year or so.

His wife was a good natured woman, easy to please and easy to get along with, as Bertelsen's friends said. In her younger years she had been rather pretty. Her smile was pleasing; her eyes playful; her laugh was music. But, it must be remembered, there was a gap of six years between them, and this gap seemed to stretch as the years passed. The wrinkles came early in her matrimonial life. Bertelsen, who was on this side of the gap, hated the sight of wrinkles; he considered them as artificial blemishes, and he cruelly told her so. It was his first offense. More wrinkles came, then fewer smiles, and even a frown. Bertelsen began to feel genuinely sorry at his bargain. And as he thought of the other

woman, he forgot his wife ; not all at once, but slowly, as one forgets a friend who has died.

They had one child, a daughter. She had her mother's eyes, her smile, and her laugh. Bertelsen saw little of her; at eight she had been sent away to a girls' school, and was not to come home before her sixteenth birthday. Bertelsen took his wife to the school once a year regularly; he was interested in the girl's education, and held long interviews with the teachers while his wife petted her daughter and told her how good and kind her father was; which, the child, being precocious and sensible, did not believe. So she cared little for Bertelsen. There was a sea of space between them which neither tried to bridge. He took it all as a thing to be expected, as a story with real trouble in it, as a matter of course, and sat down patiently to wait for the climax; for climax there must be, he thought. And

the climax came with his wife's death, three years later.

Matilda, of course, came home from the girls' school, and she did not go back. Bertelsen urged, entreated, even begged her and reasoned with her; all to no purpose. She would stay. The girl was fifteen years old. He was forty, and there were gray hairs in his head and nervousness in his body. But he was happy, quite happy, for he was free.

He met the other woman, now and then, at out of the way places, and they had reopened the old book of love. She had not married; there was no one else she cared for. Of course she could forgive him. There was nothing to forgive! It was all a mistake! It was her fault in part; she should have told him of her undying affection! Of course! Of course!

But he loved her—loved her enough to tell his daughter the smoothest lies; he loved her enough to fret and worry over the future.

He was beginning to feel Matilda's influence over him. It was feeble at first, but it grew stronger as Matilda grew older. Another climax to another story was coming.

Bertelsen had worried and fretted himself sick. His daughter's smile was pain, her look a command, and her laugh cut his nerves—they were high strung, Bertelsen's nerves. He was kept to his bed, well guarded, but well nursed by Matilda. There were many times when he nearly broke down and almost confessed his double life. Then it happened one day that the other woman came. She came again and again, and had long talks with Matilda; but she never saw the despondent, the crippled Bertelsen. Finally, when Bertelsen was nearly well, Matilda told the other woman to stay away. Before that she had told her many other things—about her mother, of course. The other woman did stay away.

Bertelsen recovered and left his bed. He

wanted to go out on the first day; but his daughter very kindly, but very firmly, said no.

"You are not strong, father." She smiled.

He realized the truth.

"In a few days," she went on, still with the undefinable smile, "we, you and I, will go to see mother's grave."

His head moved up and down mechanically.

"No one has been here, while I have been ill; no one except those I have seen?" he asked finally, and closed his eyes. Bertelsen's nerves had suffered during the last few weeks. She waited and he opened his eyes.

"Did you—did you expect any one?"

"No, no, Matilda, no, no," he hastened to say.

"Well," she said thoughtfully, "some one was here—an old woman, poorly clad, with a woolen hood. She spoke faulty grammar and appeared to be ill fed." The girl stopped short and began to laugh. Bertelsen did not hear

her laugh this time. "And," there was a look of triumph in her eyes, "she said she had cried in the church at your wedding, and that she loves you, and would die for you; and all such silly stuff. But she will never come again. I told her to stay away."

Bertelsen got up from his chair quickly, like a man suddenly made powerful. He hurried into the hallway, took his hat, and hesitated.

"You are not strong enough to go out yet," cried the girl; but her voice had lost its music.

He laughed bitterly. He had waited to hear her say that.

"Not strong!" he shouted, throwing the heavy door wide open, "I am as strong as the mighty Hercules you have read about at the school. So she was poorly dressed, and spoke a faulty language! She cried in the church, and said such silly things. Silly to you they may be," he went on, pointing his finger at

her and advancing a step, "but sacred to me. Ha! ha! She will never come again! Yes, she will, she will!"

He dashed down the steps and was gone in an instant.

"My poor and foolish father," said Matilda wearily. "All this excitement may kill him."

* * * * *

He came back quite late, but his daughter had not retired.

"To-morrow," he began abruptly, "to-morrow she will come, and her home for the future will be here. She will have your mother's room. And I ask you, Matilda," he continued with just a bit of severity, "to treat her as you would treat your mother, were she alive."

"Father!" she cried, "mother has not been dead a year—you will not marry again!"

He forced a laugh and it hurt his nerves—his heart maybe. "No, Matilda, have no fear," he said sadly. His daughter looked pleased.

"I knew you did not care for her!"

He laughed again very bitterly, and moved slowly to the door. On the threshhold he stopped and looked around. She was watching him with languid curiosity. He was about to say something, but instead laughed again, and closed the door behind him. She remembered that laugh for many years.

Captain Tommy of the Light Guard.

 APTAIN TOMMY of the Light Guard was, as we may say, in his prime many years ago. But captains, like other mortals, have their day, too. Tommy was made of tin, like the rest of his company, but wore a glittering helmet and carried a long sword in a shiny scabbard. He had military training, of course, and was proud somewhat of his superior rank. In those days, the captaincy of any company was a much coveted honor. Tommy slept with his men, under the same roof, but great generals even had done that before him. So all things considered Tommy was fairly well satisfied with himself.

The years rolled by. One after another the

valiant fighters of the Light Guard disappeared; no one knew where. Tommy missed them mostly at night, since his camp had become less crowded, and he could breathe easier. Just how his soldiers died or whatever became of them no one will ever tell. I should say that they got too little exercise and contracted lethargy in its deadliest form. This is mere conjecture. It is true, however, that Master George Gordon did neglect his Guard, but George had become too big to require this kind of protection. He was in "long pants" now. But worst of all George was the only child; he had never thought of this in connection with Captain Tommy, who began to realize that his day was waning. So the Light Guard passed away, every one of them save Captain Tommy, whom fate preserved. I am sure that had Tommy known what was to follow he would have prayed himself into the world of his old soldiers—wherever that world might be.

George Gordon went to college, graduated in proper time, and finally married a beautiful country maiden. Now it happened that George's parents died leaving the big Gordon mansion to their son and his lovely wife. Half a dozen years bring us up to the present day when this little story really begins.

For many years then, as you will understand, nothing was heard of Tommy. He lay buried under dust, behind miscellaneous trumpery, completely forgotten, in the remotest and blackest corner of the Gordon attic, and he would be lying there to this day had not a very singular thing occurred.

You see, a second Master Gordon had come upon the scene, and it was quite natural that he should have his "Light Guard" just as his father had had when he was a little fellow. Now, I must say there is much difference between Light Guards of 1900 and those of—let's say half a century before. Mr. Gordon,

who is a rich man, procured the very finest company of tin soldiers that money could buy. And money is a great power in our days. These new soldiers were up to date in every respect.

Captain Tommy knew, of course, nothing about this transaction ; he was slowly dying in the attic ; when a soldier's pride has been hurt, even time fails often to heal the wound. I venture that no one in all the Gordon household remembered that such a person as the captain had ever lived.

The new company was quartered in an armory of no mean size. Their captain was a tall and haughty fellow who carried his head very high, much like a Spanish general or dancing master. For a long while this armory stood in Master Gordon's room, but for some reason his father removed it to the attic, from which it was brought down only on Saturdays or other special occasions. I think the new

captain, whom little George had named Roberts after a famous general, felt deeply wronged at this unkind procedure, but he could do nothing and stuck to his post like a soldier.

One day when his parents were out of town Master Gordon climbed the attic stairway unobserved and called out his Guard in a loud voice. Captain Tommy heard him and shivered in his despair ; like a flash the heavy doors of the armory flew open while twenty-four gallant warriors marched out in perfect step. Captain Tommy had brushed the dust from his uniform and stood hidden behind the leg of a broken stool, listening.

"I guess they need winding up," he heard Master Gordon exclaim, when there had been a little while of silence. Then came a clicking, buzzing sound which Tommy could not understand. His legs wabbled like a tired runner's as he took a few steps ; but new life gradually

strengthened him. His grasp around the hilt of his sword tightened; his shoulders went back and his head assumed its old position of command. Master Gordon had gone. So his old company had been stolen in this way and a new captain put in his place, thought Captain Tommy with bitterness. He was old now, but could yet use his sword. There was but this one chance left—to kill the new captain or die. So he made for the armory in all haste. Captain Roberts saw him and started like a man who sees a phantom. Tommy had drawn and flew at his rival, his blade touching the other's shoulder. Like something infernal suddenly set into motion, Captain Roberts sprang at the veteran; and the clicking sound began afresh.

They fought fiercely for a moment; but what could Tommy do against such an inhuman monster! Captain Roberts was not of blood and flesh. The struggle was soon over, and

the battered body of the old tin soldier lay in a shapeless heap on the floor.

That same night Captain Robert told his men about the differences in soldiers of 1850 and to-day. "They were brave enough," he said, "but things have changed mightily since then."

The Friend's Ingratitude.

† T was not a pleasant day for travel. The cold was intense, and the hard, fine snow slashed against the cheeks like grains of dry sand. Strong, gusty winds hurled hats and caps high into the air, spinning them round like tops, on the face of the whirling clouds of drifting snow. To keep my cigar lighted was a sheer impossibility, and the smoker feels peculiarly lonesome in such weather without the service of his companionable cigar. Fortunately the distance from my stopping place to the station was not great, my train was waiting, and before I had shed my heavy ulster in the coupé I heard the engineer's signal, and we were off.

The best time to go to Steenstrup is in mid-summer or early autumn, when the big square

fields on either side of the railroad tracks are full with active peasantry, men and women, youths and maids, gathering hay, for instance, leaping about like young grasshoppers, with snatches of song, a frolic, making sport of their work—you can see and hear it all from the windows of your car.

But it is not likely that Steenstrup will interest you. They call it a town, though to an American it is little more than a scattered handful of short, wide streets, with here and there a tile-roofed house or straw-covered farmstead. There is no traffic, no obvious appearance of thrift. Work goes on quietly, almost stealthily.

Peter was at the station with a prodigious umbrella. The gray mare, he explained, had a bad foot and Hr. Larsen was sorry we would have to walk. At this the Karl took my satchel and swinging the umbrella over my head we got started.

The walk from the station was to me a kind of competition. Peter was always half a stride ahead of me and going like a pacemaker in a race. We zigzagged through the town at breakneck speed. The strength of this young giant of the country drew me on; and besides I wanted to keep my head underneath the umbrella.

"Am I walking too fast for you?" he laughed back once. It was an open challenge.

I was quite tired and puffing hard, but I would not give in.

"Not at all," I gasped back, and finally to give him convincing proof I broke loose, when there was left but half a hundred yards of our journey, and ran straight to the inn. Rather a foolish piece of business, yet very excusable, I think, in a vain old fellow like myself.

Larsen was in the door.

"The deuce!" he cried. "How you must have sprinted! The mare could have done no

better, even if well. So," he called to the grinning Peter, "the American has beaten you at your own game. Well done, Doctor! But come in, come in! The snow will soon be over and the wind is dying; we'll have a clear night."

My host had a bottle of beer waiting for me. "I knew you would be ready for it," he said.

For the folly of the violent exercise of my dash from the station I had now to pay for. My heart was thumping uncomfortably fast; my legs trembled, and the unsteadiness of my hand was so great that as I lifted the glass to my lips I spilled a quarter part of the beer on the floor. But my fatigue was not greater than my curiosity.

"Now tell me, Larsen, why you sent for me on such a beastly day as this."

"Ah," he replied quickly, "I thought you would be interested. You see," he went on, "I do not know when he will leave us. He only

came yesterday, and I wanted you to have a good look at him. To be honest, I think he is dangerous if meddled with; so we had better be careful."

"Where is the man now?"

"He has gone since dinner. He takes long walks during the day, returning only at meal-times."

"Nothing irregular in that." I was disappointed and impatient.

"Of course not. But have patience, Doctor! You will find that I have estimated him correctly. Why, only this morning, when I told him a friend of mine was coming, meaning you, he leaped up like one stark mad. I thought he would strike me. 'Friend,' he yelled wildly, 'you have no friends; you are deceived. There is no such thing.' Now what do you say to that?"

"Oh, well," I admitted, "perhaps he is interesting after all. But get me something to eat,

my good friend, and be kind enough to hurry about it. I can devour an ox."

"You Americans are always in a hurry; always want to do big things," he laughed, and ran off to the kitchen. He returned in a moment.

"He is coming," he said, almost with enthusiasm. "I saw him from the kitchen window. Maria pointed him out." Maria was his wife.

"No meal for me now," I thought.

The knob was turned round quickly and the door flew back. The object of our curiosity stamped his feet on the threshold, the snow from his shoes spattering in every direction. He glanced at neither of us, but crossed the room in a few hurried steps.

"Now!" spoke my host, a bit reproachfully.

"He is queer. Will he come down again?"

"He will—if he is hungry." Larsen shot one of his knowing glances at me.

An hour passed, in which both my appetite

and my curiosity were whetted to a keenness. Maria was willing to make me a lunch, but I had decided to wait. The mysterious guest did not look like a man to be afraid of; while his jaw was broad and square, his eyes a dark gray, made him seem harmless enough. Of course I had not seen much of him, and was in no position to draw any valuable conclusion.

At last the big, old-fashioned timepiece cracked off six strokes very emphatically, and Larsen, smiling, issued from the kitchen with: "Supper is ready, Doctor. Now we'll have a good look at him. Lucky I have so few guests at this time. I fancy my friend is not fond of company," he added, chuckling.

Peter, arrayed in a clean white shirt came in to announce that he thought the mare's foot was now so much improved that if I chose we might drive to Svendborg in the morning.

"The snow is excellent," he explained, "and the mare will like it better than the bare road."

The three of us repaired to the little, low-lofted dining-room, where Maria was running about placing dishes on the square old table that had probably seen twenty years of service. "Only porridge and pancakes, sir," she said simply, giving me a chair. But I knew that Maria could make porridge and pancakes as few women in Denmark could, and I was quite satisfied.

I had munched my first plateful of porridge and called for a second one, which Maria had gone for, when our silent guest came in. He stopped to look at us a moment, then walked slowly around the table to a chair next to mine.

Peter and Larsen both turned their eyes upon me; I turned mine upon the guest, who looked back indifferently.

"He is my friend," said my host, coming opportunely to the rescue. "I spoke to you of him this morning."

"Yes, you said he was a friend," the man

replied shortly. Then to Maria, who stood waiting, "A small portion."

I took up the thread.

"I am from America—"

"So am I," he snapped back.

The gruffness of his manner irritated me. He was, perhaps, more dangerous than I had estimated him. I would be careful. There was a long while of oppressive silence. Larsen left the table uncivilly, Peter following him. I lingered over my coffee.

"Superior pancakes," cried the man suddenly. "They can't make pancakes in America." This last was evidently addressed to himself. Folding his arms and half closing his eyes, he stared at the empty plate in front of him. He drew a long sigh. "America—back—tell—all." I could catch only a word or two. All at once his head fell lifelessly on his breast. I sprang up and made a cry, at

which Larsen and Peter darted into the room.
The guest did not move.

"He is dead," said Larsen solemnly, and with genuine sympathy.

But a few drops of cognac revived him. He sat up again and looked at me hard.

"Why did you bother me?" he demanded sullenly, but I could see that he was quite pleased.

"Because," I replied soberly enough, "you are our friend."

I had touched the wound. He reflected a moment.

"I cannot believe you," he said, "yet—"

"We saved your life," I urged.

He glanced suspiciously at us; then exclaimed:

"I might as well tell you. I am going back to give myself up. No, not to you," he said sharply to Larsen and Peter, who, frightened, drew back. He put a hand on my shoulder.

"Come," he whispered. In his room he sat down on the edge of the bed; I took the only chair and placed it very close.

"It's my conscience," he began abruptly, fixing his eyes upon mine. "I thought I could forget. I thought I was strong, heartlessly strong." He laughed a little and paused.

"No, you are not strong," I put in.

"But I was," he insisted eagerly, rising and beginning to pace the floor. "I was strong enough to—" He checked himself. "Oh, a weaker man, a boy could have done it."

After a minute of silence he made a new start.

"It is twenty years ago or more. He called himself my friend; you are listening—my friend. He was poor and I helped him. We were both young then; both orphans; that was the common tie. He had always been sickly, and could do little work. He looked to me as a guardian, a protector. The happiest hours

of my life were spent in taking care of him. He was a companion. I wanted him the weakling he was. I could not picture him otherwise. I should have hated him if he had been strong." His eyes flashed and the blood was in his cheek.

"I took him to America—to Dakota. In watching his slim, boyish figure my own strength seemed to increase. My sole ambition was to make a cosy home for him. Thus I lived for him only. The clean, crisp air of the west had a strange effect upon him. He said he wished he could join me in the work. We had a farm out there. He begged me to let him handle the plow. He was strong now, he said. But I was afraid to lose him. Then his will grew stronger. He begged me no more. I was angry. Remonstrances were vain. A day of hard work would kill him, I thought.

"Then he upbraided me, relentlessly, I who

had thrown every stone out of his path. He upbraided me. He threatened me, saying he would go away. ‘You shall not leave me,’ I cried, frenzied at the change. But he only smiled. And that night he left me.”

His eyes flashed again, and he sprang up.

“But I found him. I found him and I killed him—”

He stopped and turned upon me.

“Tell them, Larsen and Peter, to bring the police. I am ready.”

The next morning the guest did not come down. He was gone.

